9: Luke G-5 (ca. 1920-ca. 1960) 1960
EZ6 Malta EZ6

rocky surfaces of the island, the tram-lines of neolithic man; and he will notice, if he is observant, that the dimensions of the flat two-wheeled carts which, with their gaily caparisoned little ponies or donkeys, are the traditional vehicle of the Maltese countryman of to-day correspond almost exactly with those of the carts of his neolithic predecessor, as deduced from the width of these ancient tracks. If he is interested in strange animals that still survive but must be a living link with hoary antiquity, he can study on the picturesque, uninhabited islet of Filfla, now used only as a target for gun practice, a remarkable lizard of the darkest green spotted with red (*Lacerta muralis* var. *filfolensis*), which occurs nowhere else in the world but on this tiny and diminishing spit of rock.

The dominant architectural notes of the Maltese Islands are megalithic and Baroque, and the gamut thus established can scarcely be called a narrow one. So far as works of art are concerned, the Museum in Valetta, housed before World War II in the Auberge d'Italie and since 1958 in that of Provence, contains a scientifically arranged exhibition of Stone Age culture unrivalled in any other country. This collection, whose most bizarre items are the astonishing fat female deities characteristic of Maltese neolithic sculpture, was organized in chronological sequence by the Museum's late learned Director, Sir Themistocles Zammit, who made a second international reputation in the field of Maltese archæology and excavation after having made an earlier one in medical research in connexion with undulant, or Malta, fever.

But the visitor is not obliged to study the activities of these remote peoples solely in museums. If he wishes to see how the distant forbears of the present population cultivated their land he has only to watch the Maltese farmer of to-day ploughing his field; if he is a student of cultural survivals he will note the eye of Osiris still painted on the bows of Malta's sturdy little schooners and characteristic "Gozo boats." If

7: Busuttil I, Y-4, 5 (no date) 1894
EZ6 Malta EZ6

In the afternoon of the Feast, the great harbour and the several creeks, especially that of Calcara, present indeed a very lively appearance. Yachts, boats, and small crafts plough the deep, the greater part sailing, with flags and streamers flying in the breeze, laden with people, mostly clad in gay summer costumes, which they put on for the first time on this day as a sign of the approaching hot season.

Some of these gay parties keep on their crafts, singing and playing guitars and melodeons, whilst others disembark on some shady rock on the sea-shore, where they spread their table-cloths and sit down to enjoy the edibles which they bring with them.

A little after sunset, when the numerous and jolly picnic parties have emptied some bottles of wine, the boats

7: Busuttil I, Y-4, 5 (no date) 1894
EZ6 Malta EZ6

527 are seen putting off the shore and
501 steering their course homewards.

527 The custom of making swings on
526 Ascension Day, is very common in Malta, especially among the country people. In almost every village, lots of women and children may be seen swinging together and singing merrily on the day of *Lapsi*.

527 No reason could perhaps be assigned
173 by the Maltese for the practice of celebrating *Lapsi* by parties and picnics on the water, and for making swings, except that they follow the custom of their ancestors.

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796 ***St. JOHN'S EVE***
372
857 Not unlike other nations, the Maltese are not indifferent in celebrating

7: Busuttil I, Y-4, 5 (no date) 1894
EZ6 Malta EZ6

to the Custom house, the whole length of which is always crowded with thousands of picturesquely painted boats, yachts, and small crafts with living cargo. 529 526

The race course in the centre channel is always well kept clear by a couple of steam launches, and the Port Department gondolas.

The races consist of (1) four-oared fishing boats (2) double pair and single pair passage boats—that is boats employed for the conveyance of passengers —and (3) four-oared *cajjicchi.*

The boats used for racing, on this special day, are always very gaily painted and gilt, being also of a much lighter and sharper build than the others of the same kind, and the best stalwart men are always selected for rowing. [501]